2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

instances. This is especially the case with the brother-sister relationship in which the emotional and legal bond is very close. A man calls his sister by a special term—*nkashi*—to distinguish her from his classificatory sister whom he calls *munyinane* (plur. *bamunyinane*). A woman calls her brother *ndume* as distinct from her classificatory brother, whom she refers to also as *munyinane*. Both usually speak of this relationship in what struck me as a specially sentimental tone of voice. Natives seem to take pleasure in describing the brother's duty to look after (*ukusunga*) his sister, and say as a reason for this obligation that 'the man and the woman were born together from the same womb'.[1] The relationship is the subject of many proverbs and folk-tales in which the brother and sister are represented as succouring each other. In daily life, the man is on easy terms with his sister, particularly in the case of the royal family, where the interests of the two are specially identical. In Bemba society where there is a very even balance between patrilineal and matrilineal kinship there are two possible legal guardians for a woman, her father, or her mother's brother. After her father's death her brother takes the latter's place if he is old enough. Otherwise the mother's brother will look after her. Either brother, or mother's brother, will protect her if her husband dies, and defend her interests, if necessary, during the latter's life.[2] In the old days it was apparently quite common for an elderly woman to return to her brother's village to settle there in her old age and this she was able to do even if her husband remained alive by providing one of the brother's daughters as a substitute wife—*mpokoleshi*—in her place. Nowadays, besides the older women, younger women, widowed, divorced or deserted by husbands away at the mines, put themselves similarly under the protection of their elder brothers, and the phrase *Aya kuli ndume*—'she has gone to her brother'—signifies the return of the woman to her own matrilineal descent group.

The brother and sister also exert reciprocal rights over each other's children. In the old days the *nalume* had supreme power over his sister's son, and could even offer him as a slave in compensation for some irreparable injury he had committed to a

[1] *Bafyalwe pamo mumufumo limo.*

[2] If the brother is younger than the sister the position is reversed and I have found a young man with no obvious male guardian alive, living on the elder sister's village, having contracted a marriage there at her suggestion.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

601 604 614 third party. He could send for him to accompany him to war or to make a long journey at the chief's bidding. Case histories of older Bemba show frequent instances of men having settled in villages far from their original birthplace because they had 'followed their *nalume*' on some distant expedition in warrior days and had remained there. Nowadays the *nalume* can only exert these powers if he is of superior status to the father, or if the latter is away, or dead. The *nalume* has also certain rights over his maternal niece—also called *umwipwa*. He is consulted about her marriage and usually given a share of her marriage payment (*mpango*), which is technically speaking 'eaten' by the father.[1]

1177 604 593 Direct European teaching and the introduction of a money currency have strengthened the father's authority over his children as against those of the mother's brother. The former pays tax for the household, buys the children's clothes, and pays the school fees. But, on the other hand, marriage is less stable under modern conditions, partly owing to the break-down of marriage morality and partly to the absence of so many men at the mines. In these circumstances, those few men who remain in the villages are bound to look after their sisters' children as well as their own in the last resort.

601 604 614 The paternal aunt, the *nyina senge*, also has rights over her brother's children and particularly his daughters. She is believed to have power to bless or curse her brother's daughter (*umwina senge*) with fertility or barrenness, and is much feared on that account.[2] In the old days she could demand her niece as a substitute wife for her husband—the *mpokolishi* marriage described on p. 115, or as an additional one.[3] But the rights and duties of the *nyina senge* do not determine the residence of her *bepwa*, male and female, to any extent. However, it must be remembered 582 that cross-cousin marriages unite the households of brother and sister even more intimately than before, and that where the boy marries his *nyina senge's* daughter, he will go to live in her village, just as he who contracts a union with his *nalume's* child, goes to live in the latter's community. The sample village analysed

[1] This custom, an act of grace to the *nalume*—not his right, has become more important nowadays since money from 2*s.* 6*d.* to £1 has been substituted for the two bark-cloths given as *mpango* in the old days.

[2] And also given a share of the *mpango* if possible.

[3] Nowadays this right seems to be rarely exerted. I only met three cases of its occurrence.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

A man helps his sister and her children by cutting them gardens or giving them uncooked food, but not by inviting them to share in the daily meals.

The men's group based on the matrilocal system is smaller and less closely knit. Between the sons-in-law attached to one household there is a feeling of close friendship and familiarity. These young men eat and work together, and the term *Ciufi munandi*, 'the man who married with me', or into the same family, is one of affection and good fellowship. There are no taboos between a man and his wife's sisters. He laughs and jokes with them because he may one day marry them, and he works in their gardens if they need help. But the young husbands often come from different villages and clans, and will want, as soon as they can, to have gardens of their own and perhaps to take their wives back to their villages. In the same way there may be co-operation from time to time between an old man and one of his own young kinsmen, such as his grandson or maternal nephew, but these also come and go, marry in other villages, and get work with Europeans. This group does not remain in close association throughout life as do the women of the matrilocal group, whether the latter remain in the same village or not.[1] This fact has important bearings at the present time. Though the unit of male labour is often non-existent, with the absence of so many of the men at the mines, the domestic and gardening economy of the women remains for the most part intact, and there seems no doubt that women deserted for months or even years by their husbands are more happily placed in a matrilocal community than in a patrilocal one.[2]

The Value of the Cooking Team.

The practical results of this type of domestic economics should be considered, since it is apparently one that is likely to change

[1] One legal case concerned a young married woman, one of six sisters, real or classificatory, who had lived in the same village and worked so happily together that when her husband removed her to his own village after the necessary years of service, she could not bear to live away from her family. The contrast between the cheerful female group in her own village and her relative isolation in her husband's community was too great. She ran back home for the third time during my stay at the village (Pambalasa, 1930). Divorce was the final result. Such a case is an extreme instance of the female solidarity which is so marked in a matrilocal tribe of this kind.

[2] Dr. Margaret Read confirms this on the basis of a comparative study between the patrilocal Ngoni and the matrilocal Chewa of Nyasaland.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

262 592 garden close to that of Malalo so that his wife might be happy working with her mother and sisters and might get additional help in this way. The youngest son-in-law, Dicksonee (E4), had done two years' work for his wife's family before marrying Jani, but was now working locally for a European and only returned from time to time to do gardening.

593 177 The last son-in-law, ShiMutale (E5), was an interesting character, as he represented a special type of graceless good-for-nothing found in the Bemba country to-day, a young man who gets all he can from his wife's people under the old system of kinship obligations, but gives little or nothing in return. ShiMutale was always elegantly dressed in a spotless white shirt, frequently washed and ironed in public. He was constantly parting and arranging his long hair in a small mirror according to the latest fashion, and spent most of his time lounging in the *nsaka*, playing with his baby son or twanging a Bemba lyre. His most active amusement was bicycling madly around the village swearing at the children in English, of which language he knew no other phrases. I watched him from my tent door during this month, and I must admit that I had not believed it possible that an active young man of about 25 could have done nothing so consistently for so many days on end without feeling the time drag. ShiMutale had at one time worked for Europeans and sometimes announced his intention of doing so again, but in the meantime he stayed where he was. He had paid no *mpanga* for his bride, claiming the cross-cousin relationship as an excuse for not doing so, and as will be seen from the table, worked exactly six days out of twenty as compared with his father-in-law's twelve.

This case is described in detail because it illustrates the way in which a certain number of young Bemba contrive to shirk their marriage obligations under modern conditions, and thus place a heavy strain on the economic resources of the matrilocal group. They do so usually on the plea that they are resting after their work at the mines, or are about to take other jobs 'soon', and they are able to flout their duties with impunity, since the shortage of men in the district makes parents willing to put up with sons-in-law whom they would never have tolerated under the old régime. A quarrel which broke out between ShiMutale and his wife during this month illustrates this fact, and also shows clearly how the period of matrilocal marriage acts to a

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

543
177

certain extent as a time of trial for the young husband, even under the changed conditions of the present day.

On this occasion ShiMutale asked his wife, who seemed devoted to him in spite of his laziness and violence, to boil some sweet potatoes for him early in the morning so that he could entertain his friends. The potatoes were his own possession, since he had dug the beds on which they grew, although he had made no millet garden. NaMutale refused, because this would have made her too late to join her mother and sisters at work in the gardens. ShiMutale swore at her and pushed her roughly and she, after the manner of all Bemba women when insulted within earshot of their relatives, shot out a piercing yell. In a moment every one was at their door-way staring, and NaMukonda flung herself across the village in full torrent of abusive defence. This is a regular stage in every matrimonial quarrel among the Bemba—the arrival of the girl's mother, and, if possible, the man's too. People look at each other significantly and say, 'Look there! The mother has come.' They mean that the battle is set. On this occasion the villagers gathered together, and even the quiet Malalo followed in the wake of his more violent wife to support their insulted, but scarcely injured, child. The next stage in this typical quarrel came quickly. The angry women forced their way into the hut and threw out the cooking- and carrying-baskets, and removed the pots—all the women's possessions in fact. This is also the prescribed conduct in a serious matrimonial squabble.[1] The onlookers, like a chorus, commented: 'See, they have thrown out the pots.' Malalo finally led his sobbing daughter away, and the 'beaten' girl retired to her mother's hut with NaMukonda and her other daughter following, shouting obscene abuse.

The woman's family refused to cook for the husband, and though there was no chance of ShiMutale starving, more especially as he had a number of his own relatives in the village, yet the strike of the cooks had a special significance. It was a repudiation of the legal obligations of the marriage contract, just as the removal of NaMutale's cooking-pots in the first instance was a sign that a serious quarrel had begun. ShiMutale strolled about the village all day long, twanging the Bemba one-stringed lyre, with elaborate unconcern. His young friends idling in the men's shelter amused

[534]

[1] I have notes of eight matrimonial quarrels in which the procedure was just the same.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

593 177 themselves by shouting to him slyly from time to time, 'Getting hungry, sir?' To which he replied on each occasion with would-be jauntiness, 'No sir! I am extremely full' (*Yo Mukwai! Naikuta sana*). He must have known, however, that he was not in a strong position as a son-in-law who had paid no *mpanga* and was known as a wastrel. Taunts to this effect had been freely shouted by NaMukonda in the heat of the quarrel, and the refusal of the in-laws to cook might have meant anything from a public protest to the beginning of a definite break, and in the latter case, ShiMutale as a father who had paid nothing at his marriage and had done no years of service, would have no legal rights to his small son.

The quarrel in this case ended quickly. NaMutale forgot her injuries and slipped back to her husband's hut after dark. NaMukonda, apparently rather worn after the morning's screaming, sat brooding on the veranda of her hut alone. Her comments on the affair were instructive. She had not liked the marriage, but the man was a cross-cousin. 'There are no husbands for the girls nowadays'—the Bemba mothers' inevitable refrain. If things went on like this the marriage would break up and the child would belong to 'us'. But then NaMutale was in the wrong in this quarrel! 'Really, the young people of to-day!' she said. 'The girls give their husbands no respect. A woman should always submit to her husband (*ukunakila ku mulume*) but now they just disobey. Then their husbands beat them and then', ruefully, in memory of the morning's agitation, 'it twists their mothers' hearts (*ukuongoloka mitima yabo*). And then what do you think? In the evening they say, "I like him again." They don't want to sleep alone on a bed all night, and so they go back to their husbands all the same. Really!' she repeated with a shrug, and eyes raised heavenwards in protest, 'The young people of to-day!' (*Aba uno mwaka.*)

593 Whether NaMukonda was right in attributing all matrimonial troubles to modern morals is impossible to judge. It seems to me probable that any system which involves a period of trial of the son-in-law in his wife's village must result in unstable equilibrium during the first years of married life, and that the elements of tension must have existed before, even if quarrels were less frequent and less open.[1] But this case illustrates clearly the strains

[1] A more serious quarrel occurred in the same month in the house of NaCi-

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

to which the matrilocal group is subject nowadays, the parents' tolerance of unsatisfactory sons-in-law under protest, because 'there are no men in the country', the less strict tribal standards of wifely conduct, and finally, the unstable character of marriages in which no service has been done, or *mpanga* paid.

As regards its cooking team, Group B was well supplied with labour, efficiently organized by NaMukonda, and it was possible to see the matrilocal group functioning as it should as a means of training the young housewife in her work of cooking and distributing food. NaMukonda had two active young women to help her (B8 and B9) and refused to cook for her grandchildren on one occasion unless they also helped by digging up the potatoes in time.[1] She herself, unlike most of her fellow villagers, had finished piling the branches in her own garden, and though she worked on eight days out of twenty helping her daughters in their gardens, she never failed to cook because of her garden work. The labour problem which was so acute in the case of Group A was thus not a difficulty for Group B. Nor did NaMukonda seem perturbed by the appearance of extra visitors. She entertained travelling relatives, sent food to additional members of the family, and her grandchildren, if not actually all fed by her, were running in and out of her hut all day picking up food or digging up potatoes from her beds—a situation which did not occur in Group A. NaMukonda affected distress at the children's raids, but plainly loved to have them with her. 'Little crocodile!' she would say proudly of her favourite, the 8-year-old Ruti. 'She snaps at everything in the hut.'

The total man-power value of those she fed varied as much as in the case of Group A, i.e. from 5·2 to 11·6, but the amount of flour eaten per head showed a larger variation, i.e. from 0·4 to 1·3 lb. This family had a proper meal every day out of the twenty,

leshye (C8), who was beaten quite severely and without cause by her husband Yolam (C9) when in his cups. On this occasion Group C refused to cook for the son-in-law for three days, until NaKabanda (C2), realizing that Yolam was a satisfactory son-in-law in other ways, said, 'Shall we refuse food to one of the family because of a matter of beer? No! Let him share with us', and sent her daughter back again. But Yolam was still uneasy, because he had no small coin with which to compensate his wife and declared he was afraid of 'the things his wife was thinking against him in her heart'. This means two bad quarrels between husband and wife in one month, and out of ten young couples.

[1] Her middle-aged son was also punished in the same way when he passed what she considered captious criticisms on the cooking of the greens.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

two and a half hours. Even if the husband had been in the right, it would have been hard to stand up against such a protest, but in this case the village was so strongly in support of the wife, that he removed the curse with the proper ceremony before nightfall. This was a particularly dramatic incident, but I heard of a number of cases in which deserted wives were left in complete possession of the family grain bin.

At death a man's ownership of the granary is also clearly recognized. All supplies of millet and food ripening on the garden-beds, theoretically speaking, go to his heir in the direct matrilineal line, but inheritance is often only fixed after some months' delay. Thus there is usually little food left in the granary to hand on to the heir selected. In any case it is considered hard-hearted for the latter to exercise his privileges if a widow and children suffer loss by that means.

Where neither divorce nor death takes place the balance of interest between the claims of the husband and wife, or rather between his relatives and hers, has to be gradually achieved by a process of mutual adjustment, often giving rise to a good deal of tension under the particular condition of matrilocal residence. Briefly speaking, the wife has, of course, full charge of the granary, and is entirely responsible for the care and allotment of the food. As in our society it is for her to decide for whom she cooks and how much. As she belongs to a cooking team of her own family relatives and shares with them, it is natural that her own kinswomen in the matrilocal group are in a particularly strong position. On the other hand, the husband, ultimately the owner of the millet, has his own relatives to satisfy. For instance, we have seen that his sisters have very strong claims on his help. I have seen a chief's sister march into the royal enclosure, pull a cloth out of a trunk in her brother's inner room and take it away without permission, the owner merely laughing ruefully and saying, 'If I had been careful I should have hidden that cloth better.' These princesses also demand meat and beer from their brothers in an imperious manner quite at variance with the subservient behaviour of the chief's wives and courtiers. Among commoners the contrast is not so great, but the sisters are still in a privileged position. A man's mother will not have such freedom, since she is tabooed from coming into close contact with her daughter-in-law, but she also can exert her claims if in need. Women also take liberties with the

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

576 867 even seen a grown-up man seize a piece of fish from a small sister of 8, who expressed absolutely no surprise. An older girl will catch the wrist of a younger sister who has been given some snuff and scrape the precious powder out of the young girl's hand, leaving her only a little pinch for herself. The younger sister may make a face, but will not protest. In the same way I have seen a young husband call to his wife to throw him a lemon she had been given. She exclaimed: 'You crocodile you!' but threw him the fruit quite good-naturedly. Hence the rights of the elder or the headman or the Chief described in Chap. XIII, are based on beliefs very early inculcated, of what are a relative's dues. Here again the different attitude of European mothers is noticeable. In a society in which individual initiative is on the whole encouraged, and age has no particular prerogatives, we tend to see that the youngest child gets his fair share at the dinner table or in the nursery and often teach the elder children to 'Give it to Baby first'. The Bemba mother on the contrary always says: 'Let your elder brother (*umukalamba uobe*) have it! Give it to him first', and on this recognition of precedence the whole organization of daily life as well as the political system finally depends. Bemba children in fact do not seem to resent the rights of their elders, and I noticed that both little girls and boys often repeated the words *umukalamba uandi* ('my elder') in tones of great affection and pride. The constant competition between the older and younger members of the family that is so pronounced in our society does not seem to exist.[1] We encourage our children to take a pride in their personal possessions, to handle them carefully, look after them, 'put them away'. Bemba children have no material possessions beyond the twig bow or the maize cob doll, but all the objects they use they are taught to yield up on demand from an elder. In adult life the man who gives presents to his elder brother, and still more the woman who honours her elder sister, is praised with particular enthusiasm.[2]

593 [524] [431]

[1] Bemba brothers are not in competition with each other for the family inheritance as among the patrilineal cattle-owning people of South Africa. There is little material property to inherit, and in any case the boys marry early in life and hence join different economic and local groups.

[2] When I travelled with my older sister for some weeks in this area I noticed that whenever I carried something for her or gave her precedence, a delighted murmur went up from the watching women: 'She honours her *umukalamba*. Look, she is carrying it for the big one.' It meant conformance to their own code.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

593 604 With this system of matrilineal descent the ties between a woman and her brother are very close. The woman produces children who are the heirs of her brothers. The man is the natural guardian of his sisters' children, and he must be consulted about his uterine niece's marriage and could claim the right to marry her where he pleased. He could protect her after her marriage if he wished to do so. The mother's brother could generally claim possession of his sister's children if her marriage broke down. In [567] the old days he could give one of the children as a slave or a blood-wite to the head of a family to whom he or one of the lineage group owed reparation. He could command the services of his sister's son and bid him follow him to war. The woman in her turn could com- [789] mand the services of her brother's daughter and was thought to be able to bless or curse the fertility of the latter's marriage. Brother and sister can take each other's property and behave in a free and easy way with each other.

591 171 596 Marriage is uxorilocal among the Bemba and among kindred tribes such as the Bisa, Lala, Lamba, Cewa, and Kaonde which also perform a kind of chisungu ceremony. A young man who marries goes to live in his wife's village where he builds himself a hut and becomes a member of her extended family. This is a domestic and economic unit. The sons-in-law work together under [606] the father-in-law and the daughters with their mother. The man gives service to his father-in-law rather than cattle or other goods as in most other Bantu societies. A young couple has no cooking fire of its own to begin with. The girl cooks with her mother and sends food to her husband at the man's shelter, where he sits with his friends. At first the couple have no granary of their own and no gardens and when they acquire the latter, later in their married life, the gardens are cleared near those of the rest of the extended family group.

596 621 As a family group of this kind grows in size, its head often chooses to separate from the old village and to start a new one of his own. Hence the desire of a Bemba to have many daughters in order to be able 'to found a house'.

591 After the marriage has been established, and children have been born to the union, it remains a question for individual decision whether the husband is given permission to remove his

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

562 often becomes imperious and managing and obviously enjoys her position as she sits on the verandah of a large hut, directing operations and dividing food. This is the position a woman achieves by a stable marriage, and one which she longs to achieve.

833 Sex relations are openly desired by Bemba and celibacy for men or women is not admired. A girl who rejects men is criticized as having 'pride of the womb' (*cilumba ca munda*). Abstinence is only practised for ritual reasons, by a woman nursing a child, for instance. Adultery in women was, however, savagely punished in 837 the old days and is a cause of divorce. It is still thought to cause death in childbirth. Men are not very seriously criticized for adultery although it is thought a terrible crime for them to 'kill' their children by not submitting to the purification rites.

462 The two sexes are divided in everyday life as regards their work 264 and recreations. Men sit in their own shelter at night and eat together there. Women, on the other hand, are grouped round their own house verandahs. Men have their own economic tasks and ● 593 women theirs. Girls do not enter marriage with any ideal of companionship with their husband. A young couple is not expected to show affection in public and a bridegroom tends to be despised for spending time with his wife. But affection grows over the years in the case of a stable marriage.

593 There are certain obvious contradictions in the husband's 562 position. Menfolk are dominant in Bemba society. Women used to [576] greet men kneeling, and they still do so on formal occasions today. Men receive the best of the food and take precedence at beer drinks and on other social occasions. They speak first in family matters. Men are expected to take the initiative in sex affairs. Women are married (*ukwupwa*—the passive form) while men marry (*ukwupa*—the active form). Girls are taught to please their husbands and are considered responsible for giving them pleasure in sex relations. Women calmly accept the fact that their husbands will beat them 'when they are young and their hearts get hot quickly'.

593 The contradiction between the masterful male and the sub- 562 missive son-in-law, between the secure young married woman backed by her own relatives and the submissive kneeling wife, is one which first struck me forcibly in the course of the chisungu

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

ceremony. This contradiction, I think, finds expression and perhaps resolution in the chisungu which might be regarded as an extreme expression of the dilemma of a matrilineal society in which men are dominant but the line goes through the woman.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

881 present, but *banacimbusa* are rather wealthier than their fellows
554 owing to the payments they receive, and they carry themselves
443 with considerable dignity and circumstance.
793

The *nacimbusa* stands in a special relationship to the girl she
[405] has initiated throughout her life. She will probably deliver the girl's first child and act as *mbolwa*, or special guardian, to the baby.

881 *The messenger.* In the old days when the exchange of feasts
202 formed a more important part of the ceremony than they do now,
576 the *nacimbusa* was assisted by a woman known as the *nakalambo*, who was employed to invite the guests to the ceremony by rolling on the ground in front of their houses—the Bemba form of obeisance to a chief. They also fetched clay for the pottery and supervised the ritual cooking of the food.

881 *The candidates and their bridegrooms.* The initiation candidate
584 is known as the *nacisungu*. As I have said, these girls were usually betrothed before the ceremony, but it was possible to carry out rites in the case of a girl who was not yet affianced. The bridegroom of a betrothed girl takes part in certain of the ceremonies under the title of *shibusinga*, and this term is also extended to the sister or cross-cousin who may replace him in certain parts of the ceremony.

881 *The relatives.* Other relatives include the girl's parents and her
593 father's sister. The girl's mother is responsible for providing food
604 and beer, and her father's sister is believed to have a special influence over the fertility of her paternal niece and to stand in a special relationship to her. But the ring of relatives is comparatively small. The uxorilocal family is the chief unit involved.

881 *The character of the rite.* The chisungu is a popular ceremony
533 involving much dancing and singing. There is a special drum-beat characteristic of chisungu ceremonies which is frequently used at ordinary beer feasts and always used throughout the rite. Drums are beaten inside the initiation hut, and on the dancing space outside, but they are also carried wherever the women go, some miles out into the bush and back again. The singing is accompanied, as always among the Bemba, by the beat of the drums and by the
881 clapping of hands. Some songs are peculiar to the ceremony and
535 are necessary parts of the rite, but some can be sung at other times. All the chisungu dances are of a characteristic type. They

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

[881] has given you.' The ceremonial from this moment begins to represent the handing over or giving of secrets to the girl, and it emphasizes her kinsmen's and husband's obligations to help her.

NINTH DAY

Modelling the large pottery emblems

[881] 532 The next morning's work began at about eleven o'clock. Great piles of clay had been collected outside the hut and Nangoshye and a few helpers set to work to model what looked like an enormous snake coiled to cover the whole of the hut floor. When it was finished, legs were added round the outer coil. The whole was decorated with white, red and black earth and stuck all over with marrow, castor-oil and bean seeds set carefully about two inches apart. The work was very heavy. The group of women slapped and smoothed the clay with the utmost concentration until about five in the evening, none of them pausing for a regular meal. The task seemed to me endless. As the evening wore on, I suggested sticking the marrow seeds further apart to get the work done quicker. The idea was evidently a shocking one. Nangoshye was indignant. 'Ala! Mother! We couldn't do a thing like that. We must do everything with elegance (*bwaku*). We must do it as we always do it.' Here was evidently a part of the ceremony that could not be skimped.

The interpretations of this emblem were curious. The women were reluctant to talk about it. Nangoshye first called it rays of the sun (*amashinde eya itenge*) and said it was to teach the girl that the sun was high and she must get on with her work. Later, [531] she admitted it was also a snake. It was manhood (*bwaume*).

The brother and sister

[881] 532 ● 573 Meanwhile, some of the younger women had been modelling two small figures of a naked man and woman standing flat against the wall about two feet high. The man's arms were flung out wide, one hand on the shoulder of the woman who had her other hand folded across her face. The figures were described as 'the brother and sister'. They were the subject of eager delight throughout the day. Visitors kept pointing them out to me with evident pleasure. 'Look, the girl is crying because her father has died, but now the

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

brother is looking after her.' 'There is the brother. He says, "Hush! don't cry! Follow me. I am going to look after you now."' 'Yes, she must honour her brother now because her father is dead.' Over and over again details of the figures were criticised and admired. Most Bemba delight in describing the brother-sister relationship which is such a pivot of the matrilineal system. They refer to it in proverb and folk-tale, and adopt a specially sentimental tone in speaking of it in daily life. Most of the chisungu ritual stresses the husband's duty to feed and clothe his wife, but here the women seem to emphasise the brother's perpetual obligation to look after his sister before, during and after her marriage. Some obscene jokes made about the navel of the woman's figure made me wonder whether there was also some representation of brother-sister incest, but the navel itself is considered an amusing and obscene part of the body by the Bemba, so that I do not know if I am right.

The bed

A third model standing against the wall consisted of three hollow squares of clay. It was known as the bed or the 'blankets'. This model did not seem to attract much attention, although women began to sing a song about a great *nacimbusa* wearing a plumed head-dress. (No. 23)

(One woman said the model represented the girl's bed. Another that it was to teach the girl that even if her husband gave her no blankets or clothing yet she was to stay with him. Whatever he did she was just to look on (*ukutamba*) and not to speak of it to her friends. In the old days, she added, a girl could not get a divorce from a man who did not provide for her. If she went to complain, her grandmother would merely say, 'Well, you must sit naked, then. Stay with the fool you are with'. (*cipuba cobe.*))

Magic of attraction

After this hard day's work, I was surprised to find that the whole design was suddenly pulled to pieces two hours after it was finished and when it had only just been shown to the *banacisungu*. Every marrow seed was taken out carefully and whitened in sorghum flour for use the following day. The clay was stacked up outside the hut. Nangoshye remained behind to stick some magic leaves in the roof of the hut. 'It is magic (*bwanga*). We put it there

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

that is recognised to be cumulative. A girl may have little intellectual understanding of what is being done at the time of her chisungu, although she may be in a highly emotional state in which she is likely to be suggestible to the general emphasis laid on the importance of marriage and childbirth. Next year however she will act as a young helper of the *nacimbusa* and so her knowledge will grow. As one old *nacimbusa* put it 'If she has seen two ceremonies, or three, a girl will come to me and say "Tell me about the crocodile". She remembers and then she comes and asks me again "Tell me some more about the crocodile" and I tell her more. But other girls have no ears. They do not ask anything. They just say "Let it be, those are things of the chisungu" '. In other words, clever girls begin to memorize and get more and more knowledge of the deeper associations of the symbols and these girls probably become specialist *banacimbusa* as they grow older. The others, no doubt, give up when they find they cannot master the intricacies of the ceremonial.[1]

Secondly the chisungu teaches, not the technical activities of the wife, mother and housewife, but the socially approved attitude towards them. The women themselves see this point and, in fact, made it to me. An intelligent *nacimbusa* will admit that the girls know how to cook and grind but will say that after her chisungu a young girl does her work in a different way. Such women explain that, when young, a girl can idle in the gardens if she likes and her mother will shrug her shoulders and say 'She is not grown up'; but when she is married, she cannot refuse her duties or it will be a cause of divorce. Husbands will scold a lazy wife and this will bring shame on her family. As one woman put it: 'Before, if they were called to work they could go slowly. Now they have to run.' In other words, the girl is told that she has to do things with a new spirit and a new sense of responsibility. The rite not only consecrates the woman's duties in the sense of making them seem honourable, but it is an occasion for the public affirmation of the legal obligations of the marriage. There are pottery emblems associated with most of the duties of bride and bride-

[1] The Kriges point out that a Lovedu girl is only considered properly initiated when she has witnessed the ceremonies six times. Cf. *The Realm of a Rain Queen*, 1943.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

groom in marriage. A glance at the list given in Appendix B will show that there are songs associated with the girl's duty to her husband and to her in-laws, with the correct behaviour of the mother towards her child and to the community of her fellow-women. Other songs and figurines are associated with the wife's domestic duties as a gardener or a cook. There are duties she assumed at marriage and as part of her marriage contract, and it will be remembered that during the last night of the ceremony the girl has to sing each song herself and handle the associated pottery *mbusa*. It seems likely therefore that these rites are the means by which the girl publicly accepts her new legal role. These are the obligations handed down to her. These are the *mbusa* which she is given at her ceremony and which her friends congratulate her on receiving. It must be remembered too that for the Bemba girl these marriage obligations are probably the first acts of individual responsibility she has been asked to undertake, a point to which I will return later.

There are, of course, other social obligations mimed in the chisungu ceremony, such as the proper submission of the girl to her husband; the distribution of food to the family; and the exchange of gifts. The relationship between brother and sister is depicted in the pottery image known by that name for example; there is also the squat and unattractive figure of the lazy wife. I think that these mummeries, to use the term employed by the Kriges in their description of Lovedu ceremonial, must be reckoned as rather different from the rites of role assumption mentioned above. The women were amused at seeing the images of the brother and sister but there was no insistence that the girl herself must handle these or herself sing the attached song.

It is difficult, and probably unnecessary, to draw hard and fast lines between mimetic rites designed to produce a result, and which can therefore be reckoned as magic behaviour; rites which represent behaviour associated with a social role; and rites by which the individual publicly proclaims that she is ready to accept a role which will afterwards be enforced by legal penalties. I use here the terms 'magic rites', 'representative rites' and 'rites of role assumption' because they seem to me to correspond to differences in the people's own attitude.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

The Interpretation of the Ceremony

X881
183

TABLE I

	Pottery figures	*Pottery floor models*	*Wall designs*	*Songs*	*Total*
Chisungu rules Protection of fire	2			8	10
Social obligations of husband and wife.	14	1		4	19
Obligations to in-laws	3				3
Domestic duties	2			8	10
Agricultural duties	3	1		3	7
Maternal duties	4			3	7
Obligations between mother and daughter				3	3
Sex and fertility	4	2	1	5	12
Chief's power	3	1		3	7
General ethical rules	2	1		6	9

THE CHISUNGU IN RELATION TO TRIBAL DOGMA AND VALUES

X881
●593

The relation of the chisungu to the marriage institution of the Bemba has been clear from the start. It expresses marriage morality—the girl's submission to her husband and his duty to provide for her, and the domestic, agricultural and sexual obligations of both. It provides for the public acceptance of these

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

The Chisungu in Relation to Tribal Dogma and Values 881X
duties, most of which are represented in mime. It gives magic pro- 593
tection to the parties concerned.

How far does the ceremony express other tribal beliefs and 881X
values? The following diagrams attempt to show the relation of 182
certain characteristic features of Bemba culture, as it is described in Part I, to the chisungu and to other ceremonies which go to form the ritual pattern of this tribe.

The most important of these ritual series are three in number, if 881X
importance is judged, as I think it should be, by the length and 182
complexity of the rites and the time and interest shown in them. 622
The first of these ritual series is the ceremonial surrounding chief- 241
tainship—the long and arduous rites of royal burial, the almost equally protracted and complicated ceremonies for the installation of a great chief, and those for the building of his new village and his sacred relic huts. The second is the series of economic rites carried out at the clearing of the bush, the firing of the piled branches on the cleared site, the sowing of the seeds, and the harvesting and first fruits—and in the old days those concerned with war. The third comprises the chisungu ceremonies themselves.

The ritual pattern in all these ceremonies is based on an essentially homogenous body of beliefs—that is to say the dogma which links authority with the exercise of supernatural power based on access to ancestral spirits by those who have correctly handled sex and fire. In order to secure blessings in war, for tree-cutting, sowing, first-fruits, the filling of the granaries and for good weather, human fertility, harmonious relations in the village or a successful reign for the paramount chief, those in authority must have ceremonial intercourse with their head wives and then light new fire.[1] The same must be done when a new role is assumed, when, for example, a chief is installed or a girl made nubile, or a couple married. Such people are separated from the rest of the community and restored to it after an act of ceremonial intercourse —the lighting of new fire, the touching of the lips of the aspirants to the new role with a particle of food cooked on the new fire,[2] and their presentation to the community for congratulation and

[1] The economic rites are described fully in my *Land, Labour and Diet in N. Rhodesia*, 1939.

[2] *Ukubalishya* or *ukubapa kakabe*.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

pression of this principle of social grouping beyond the precedence given at the court to the descendants of certain clans who accompanied the first Citimukulu to the present territory, and some ritual duties based on clan membership. In the chisungu however, it is the family which is emphasised and not the lineage. It must be recalled that the Bemba boy provides his own small token payments at marriage and does service for his father-in-law. His maternal relatives do not often help him and they are not economically interested in the success of the marriage as are bride's relatives among the patrilineal Southern Bantu. The boy himself is making an individual contract with all his wife's relatives. The girl's father and mother and the father's sister are the main actors in the ceremony and the father is the potential head of the extended family which will be based on uxorilocal residence.

Further, the clan and lineage have no political functions as corporate groups except in the case of the royal dynasty. It might therefore be concluded that ceremonies for expressing corporate feeling are not necessary. It might be equally well concluded that the ceremonies connected with chiefs' succession do in fact portray the principles of matrilineal descent and that the chisungu emphasizes the girl's duty to bear children for her maternal relatives. These suggestions should be tested in other matrilineal societies.

It seems clear that the maintenance of a stable family group is a difficult matter among the Bemba. There is the desire of the girl to stay with her own people which is opposed to that of the boy who wishes to return to his, and there are no economic links to bind them to one village rather than another. This type of contract may account for the chisungu ritual which stresses the link between husband and wife; the supernatural sanctions against adultery; and the constant admonishment of the girl to submit to her husband, to give him honour and also to give honour and food to her in-laws. The series of presentations of food to the son-in-law might also be listed as part of the whole process of winning the young bridegroom and persuading him to stay in his wife's village.

To conclude, Bemba chieftainship rites express a number of beliefs that are common to the chisungu such as the sex-fire-blood association and the link between political authority and the ac-

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

firmly convinced that the conduct of each partner to a marriage has a magical effect on the health of the other, and even on that of a third party who commits adultery with one or the other.

If a man dies, his spirit is thought to linger round the body of his widow, and to be a potential danger to anyone subsequently marrying her. The same is true of a widower on the death of his wife. It seems clear that the clan of the man or woman is involved, since, unless the wife is inherited, a substitute from the dead partner's clan is required to sleep with the surviving partner in order to fetch his or her spirit back to the clan.

One could interpret this requirement by saying that the spirit of a dead Bemba is thought to haunt the living if the departed man or woman has been defrauded of his or her rights. If this interpretation is correct, it can be assumed that a man who sleeps with the widow before the necessary ceremony of 'taking off the death' has taken place is regarded as defrauding the dead man of the marital rights he had acquired. The clan brother who sleeps with the widow to take off the death which lingers on or around her presumably acts as the social equivalent of the dead man and not on behalf of the clan as a whole; the matrilineal clan or lineage does not normally act as a corporate group with regard to the marriage of one of its male members, although the woman's lineage, in the person of her mother's brother, does assume such a position of control.

Should it be objected that the initial rights of husbands over wives in Bemba society are much less substantial than those of husbands in the patrilineal bride-wealth tribes, this must be admitted; yet in Bemba society, perhaps just because of the lack of durable property in which status can be expressed, there is a tremendous insistence upon points of precedence and honour, and fights over what seem to us to be trivial claims and dues. So the apparent contradiction between the strength of the mystic links between spouses and the weakness of the economic ties between them is not so surprising a paradox in terms of Bemba culture as it would be in our own. Moreover however uncertain a husband's rights as father may be, his sexual rights over his wife are never questioned. It is these which are at issue in the ceremony of 'taking off the death'. These interpretations, however, are guesswork;

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

593 much more comparative information is needed before adequate ones can be given.

881 581 892 Another apparent paradox is the contrast between the position of the bridegroom in daily life, and the role in which he is depicted in the chisungu. In village affairs he must be submissive and quiet, as befits a stranger. He works under the orders of his in-laws and only gradually wins his position as head of his own family. In the chisungu he appears as a roaring lion, a lion-killer, a crocodile, a hunter, a warrior and a chief. The bridegroom in a matrilineal society of the Bemba type is honoured as a *genitor*, not as a *pater*. The bride belongs to her own matrilineage and the bridegroom is allowed access to her to make her fertile. He is welcomed in the village as a procreator, and honoured as such.[1] The bride's family is indebted to the bridegroom for 'the gift of a child'. In the chisungu rite it is the bridegroom's sister who 'begs for parenthood'. The virility of the bridegroom is emphasised throughout the [585] rite, and the marriage ceremony which follows is a test of his procreative powers; he must give a sign of his potency by throwing a burning brand out of the house on his marriage night. The chastity of the girl is not praised either in the chisungu or the marriage ceremonies. It is sociologically irrelevant in societies of this type.

892 171 We might expect to find some kind of association between this kind of matrilineal organisation and ritual stresses on fertility, such as tests of the virility of the man or a ritual marking of the first conception. I think evidence for it exists. Among the Fort Jameson Cewa the virility of the man is tested by a fire-lighting ordeal in the bush. If the fire lights, the man is known to be potent. The Nyanja give ritual stress to the conception of the first, sometimes the second, child of a union. The Yao sacralise puberty. Yao puberty rites lead to a marriage ceremony, and marriage ceremonies are followed by a celebration of the birth of the first child of the union. An obsolete Yao rite apparently honoured the virility of the man after his wife had been found to be pregnant. It seems possible that the Bemba ceremony of 'taking the child' is a

[1] Yao informants told Clyde Mitchell that a son-in-law was just like a rooster who comes into the yard to fertilise the hens but never owns them. Bemba fathers have more extensive powers than Yao fathers but they are depicted in the same light in proverbs and folk-tales.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

similar solemnization of the fertility of a union. (See Appendix A.)

If a Bemba husband fails to give his wife a child, his marriage comes to an end. If he makes her pregnant, but she dies in childbirth, he will be held responsible by the heads of her matrilineage and by her father and mother. He is said to have 'killed' their child.[1] On the other hand, if he succeeds in the hazardous enterprise of Bemba marriage, he 'founds a house' and acquires not only status but rights of approach to his own matrilineal ancestors.

The honouring of the son-in-law in the chisungu also enacts the desire of the womenfolk to attract a young man to make his home in their village. There may be more in the chisungu mimes than this. It is at least possible that the women had an unconscious sense of guilt about robbing fathers of their children, children who are so much wanted and which only men can give. Bemba girls are brought up in a male-dominated society and are taught to kneel to men and to put them first. Their fathers are respected autocrats in the home, but are dethroned as their children grow up and realise that ultimate power lies with their mothers' brothers. The women court men to give them children, but they do not allow them the full rights of a sociological father or *pater*. They deny him ultimate power over his children; perhaps they compensate him by giving him exaggerated respect in the chisungu as the procreating male.[2]

Sex hostility is not apparent in the chisungu. There are songs which can be interpreted as mocking at men but I did not hear them sung, and they do not seem to be an integral part of the ceremony. The women certainly stress their complete command over matters concerning childbirth. The mother of the girl, her father's sister, and the mother of the boy unite in this respect: this sex grouping cuts across those based on lines of descent. The secrecy of the chisungu may be women's compensation for their seclusion from other aspects of tribal life. But there is nothing to

[1] When a Princess was safely delivered of a child in the old days, the friends of her lover did the dance for a lion-killer returned from the hunt and shouted 'He is saved! He is saved!'

[2] D. Schneider reminds me that according to psycho-analytical theory the penis of the man is equated with his child. He suggests that the Bemba father is robbed of his child but compensated by the symbolic representation of his virility in the chisungu.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

match the ritual hostility between the sexes shown in some other initiation or marriage rites.[1]

Traces of hostility are revealed in the man's attitude to the chisungu. At least one Bemba man told me that unless the rites were performed 'our wives will hate us and give us no respect'. I have also heard remarks from women which seem to show that they are anxious lest they alienate the husbands attracted to the matrilineage. For instance, girls are instructed not to cry out in childbirth 'because it is a thing of shame. These are the secret things of women. Because the man will hear and will say "It is I who gave her that belly. I am ashamed because other women don't cry out like that".'

To conclude, Bemba evidence supports the suggestion that there is a connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies which emphasize the importance of fertility. In any society in which it is believed that women provide all the physical substance from which the foetus is formed, this would be natural; it is the case in Bemba society. Moreover, the connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies has been observed in a number of other African communities.[2]

I have suggested that there are also other possible associations, between matriliny characterized by absence of marriage payment, for instance, and instability of marriage with anxieties and taboos centring round the beginning of married life. A further association is suggested between matriliny combined with uxorilocal marriage, and initial inferiority of the young husband combined with compensating honours given him in the rituals of marriage or initiation. I have also suggested, very tentatively indeed, that in this particular matrilineal society there may be a connection between the lack of open hostility between the sexes and an unconscious feeling of guilt at robbing the man of his children, which is expressed in fears on the part of the women that the men will leave them, and on the part of the men that their wives will not respect them unless taught to do so by the chisungu.

[1] Cf. M. Gluckman, 'The role of the sexes in the Wiko circumcision ceremonies', in *Social Structure* edited by M. Fortes, 1949, and P. Mayer, 'Privileged obstruction of marriage rites among the Gusii', in a paper read to the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1950.

[2] See Appendix A for a further discussion on this point.

596 girl has no fire-place of her own when she marries, and remains a member of her mother's cooking-group, even as a young married woman. This extended family group is not a joint household in the sense of a compound surrounded by a wall, or a homestead or kraal separated from other houses by some form of hedge, but a group of households which cooperate even though the huts in which they live may be scattered through the village. When a married man with children wins the right to remove his family to his own village, it is a unit of this kind which usually moves with him. Richards describes the delight of a Bemba man in the birth of daughters who will attract sons to the village and build up a group of this kind. In fact, although a woman's children belong to her clan and must submit ultimately to the authority of her brother, who could, in the old days, sell them into slavery, the father nevertheless acquires considerable authority over his wife and children in a stable marriage. When the children are small they obey him; when the daughters marry they stay at first under his rule; and even the sons who go elsewhere to marry, remember their father, give him presents and may even join him later in preference to living with their mother's brother. Children also take their father's name, although they belong to their mother's clan, and some "sons of the chief" are given minor chieftainships as well as the royal princes - the sisters' sons of the chief. Richards emphasizes the extent to which authority is divided between the father and the mother's brother in this area, with a tendency for the power of the father to increase under modern conditions.(1)

543

604
611

604 Richards states that the avunculate is stronger at the present day among the Bisa. It is not quite clear whether this is a structural difference or due to the fact that the Bisa are, on the whole, less in contact with European civilisation. Little is known of this aspect of kinship among the Aushi and Unga. There seems, however, to be a marked contrast between the position of the father and mother's brother among the Bemba and among the Cewa and Yao to the east, where the avunculate is again much more strongly developed and there seems to be some form of corporate matrilinage.(2)

596 It will be seen that as regards residence and common activities the effective kinship unit is not one based on unilineal descent, as is common among the patrilineal, patrilocal Bantu, but a loosely organised group of kinsfolk composed of near relatives on both sides of the family. The Bemba call this group a *lupwa*.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

601 The bilateral character of Bemba kinship ties is reflected in the system of nomenclature. It will be found that in one's own generation, where there is the maximum distinction in terminology, a man uses the term *munyinane* for his own brothers and for parallel cousins, male and female, on his father's and his mother's side. Only his own sister is called by a special term, *nkushi*. A woman in the same way uses the sibling term for her own sister and for her parallel cousins, male and female, but uses a special term, *ndume*, for her own brother. No marriage is possible between a man and any woman who is a *munyina* on the maternal or paternal side. A special term *mufyulu* is used by men and women for their cross-cousins, i.e. either for the father's

(1) Richards, I, 1934 and 9, 1950. (2) Tew, 1950, pp. 11, 43.

167 Province districts in which the majority of the Bemba live:-(1)
464

Kasama	50%
Chinsali	29%
Mpika	30%

Estimates for other districts containing some Bemba are:-

Abercorn	49%
Isoka	Not given
Mporokoso	40-70%
Luwingu	20%

It must be stressed that these estimates are not based on precise data. But despite the fact that the figures are only approximate, the general conclusion as to the large extent of migrancy is not in doubt.

In 1937 the three districts(2) in which the majority of Bemba live contributed 21.9% (1937 men) of all Northern Province labour (8,752) to the Copperbelt, and 11.3% of the total labour force employed on the Copperbelt (17,128 men). The contribution of all districts containing some Bemba(3) represented 46.5% (4,071 men) of all Northern Province labour and 23.8% of all labour.

167 Marriage and the family are affected by this high rate of migration
593 of marriageable males. As in other parts of Africa where this system of migratory labour is prevalent, the absence of the man naturally leads to a loosening of the marriage tie. Women left alone for three or four years contract other unions in their husbands' absence. The amount of land that can be put under cultivation is also reduced and the economic condition of the wife and children is inevitably worsened. There are, however, certain factors inherent in the matrilineal system which do not apply in the patrilineal areas to the east and south. Bemba society does not recognise a stable residential unit based on the kinship of its male members as do the patrilineal Ngoni to the east, and the absentee men have fewer permanent ties to bind them to a particular village at home and seem to have a less developed sense of allegiance to such villages. Moreover, the marriage contract in this area depends, as we have seen, on the giving of service to the father-in-law rather than the payment of money or goods. This service cannot be given when the young husband is at the mines, and a small monetary payment of about 10/- is given in lieu. The whole process

(1) *The Annual Report on African Affairs* for 1948 gives the following figures for that year for the three Bemba districts:-

Individual District	*% taxable males absent*	*% employed in Northern Rhodesia*	*% employed outside Northern Rhodesia*
Kasama	53.55	17.06	36.49
Chinsali	39.54	10.74	28.8
Mpika	28.62	3.9	24.72
Average	40.47	10.56	30.00

(2) Kasama, Chinsali, Mpika.
(3) Kasama, Chinsali, Mpika, Abercorn, Isoka, Mporokoso, Luwingu.

by which a young son-in-law is gradually incorporated into his wife's group is therefore altered. The young wife remains behind with her own people and not with her in-laws and thus, perhaps, is in a happier position than she would be in a patrilineal society; but Read considers that the brides are better looked after among the patrilineal Ngoni, where a woman's in-laws have made a considerable marriage payment for her and conceive it to be their duty to look after her while her husband is away.(1)

AGE SETS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Age is not stressed as a principle of social grouping. Precedence is reckoned on the basis of seniority and, as among other peoples, there are special terms for the various stages of life, but there are no boys' initiation ceremonies and no regiments based on age such as are found among the Nilo-Hamitic groups in East Africa. The existence of certain occupational groups, as fishing communities, and of associations, such as those of iron-workers among the Aushi and Chishinga, has already been noted. While there are no secret societies among the Bemba, the Twa in the swamps of Bangweulu were renowned for *Butwa*, a secret society whose influence at one time extended the length of the Luapula river on both banks as far as Lake Mweru. Among the tribes affected by the cult were the Aushi, Unga, Shila, Tabwa in the group at present under consideration, and also the Lamba and Lunda.(2) It is suggested that in its original form *Butwa* is now extinct,(3) but it is uncertain whether it still exists in a modified form. Membership was not restricted by age or sex and people were initiated into the mysteries at a festival which lasted several days. The avowed aims of the society were to suppress selfishness and promote social life and its main attractions seem to have been dancing, singing, beer drinks and sexual licence; there was also considerable prestige attached to the ability to converse in the secret language *Lubendo*.

LOCAL AND TERRITORIAL GROUPING

The basic residential group is the village - a collection of 30 to 50 huts in the case of a commoner and several times this number in the case of a chief. All these peoples live in villages rather than isolated homesteads, but the size of the villages and their propinquity vary widely from area to area; Bemba villages, for instance, are often 16 to 20 miles apart.

The village normally develops as a kinship unit. It can come into existence when a middle-aged or elderly man feels he has a sufficient following of relatives to justify his application to the chief for permission to set up a community of his own. While it is generally built close to relatives, the abundance of land makes it possible to build anywhere within the chief's administrative district. The nucleus is the headman's own matrilocal extended family composed of his young married daughters and their children, together with members of his matrilineage such as his widowed sisters and their sons and daughters. The number of relatives attached to a headman varies with his popularity and efficiency. A man may also succeed to the headmanship of a village by taking the name of his maternal grandfather or maternal uncle by the *kupyanika* system already referred to (see p.15). A

(1) Quoted by Richards, 1940.
(2) Anon. N.A.D.A., 1948.
(3) Brelsford, 5, 1946, p.14.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

based on descent in nearly every case. Chieftainships were limited to one clan, as we have seen; some of the councillorships (i.e. the *bakabilo*) are confined to a few of the older clans; and headmanships, though they may be won through the chiefs favour, tend to become hereditary in their turn. All priestly offices are hereditary without exception, as is natural where an ancestral cult of this type is practised. Magico-economic specialists, particularly those in charge of fishing villages, usually acquire their powers by descent also, as do some of the doctors and diviners (*yanga*). In each case the supernatural powers almost invariably correlated with political authority in this area are conferred by a rite, of great complexity, in the case of the succession of a chief, known as *ukupyanika*. For these reasons it is essential to study the dogma of descent by which these powers are believed to be transferred from one generation to another, and the legal rules of succession by which status and office are passed from one man to another.

(*a*) *The Dogma of Descent*. By dogma of descent I mean, first, those theories of procreation[1] which express a people's beliefs as to the physical contribution of the father and mother to the formation of the child, and hence the traditional conception of the physical continuity between one generation and the next; and next their beliefs as to the influence of the dead members of each social group over the living, and hence the social identification[2] of a man with the line of his dead ancestors.

Among the Bemba it is believed that a child is made from the blood of a woman which she is able to transmit to her male and female children. A man can possess this blood in his veins, but cannot pass it on to his children, who belong to a different clan. Physiological paternity is recognized. Children are often described as being like their fathers, and are expected to give the latter affection and respect although they have no legal obligations to them under the matrilineal system. 'We take our fathers' presents because they begot us,' they say. But it is nevertheless the physical

[1] This term was first introduced by Malinowski, who showed how the rules of matrilineal descent among the Trobriand islanders are buttressed by beliefs that the father makes no physical contribution to the birth of his child. Similar material published by Rattray from the Ashanti area shows a belief in a double contribution of blood from the mother and spirit from the father correlated with a bilateral emphasis on descent.

[2] To use a term employed in a very stimulating manner by Radcliffe Browne.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

continuity of the mother's line of ancestors which is the basis of legal identification with her descent group.[1] A royal princess might even produce an heir by a slave father in the old days without lowering her child's prestige. The relationship between brother and sister, which is a very close one, legally and ritually, is based on the fact that the two were born from one womb, and in the case of the royal family it appears to be equally strong when the two are children of different fathers. These theories of procreation account, not only for the matrilineal descent of the Bemba, on which succession to chieftainship is based, but also for the rank accorded to the royal princesses as mothers of chiefs, and the headmanships and other positions of authority given them.

The Bemba dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living is also of the utmost importance as a basis for political authority. The spirit of a dead man (*umupashi*, plur. *imipashi*) is thought to survive as a guardian presence associated with the land or village site formerly inhabited, and as a spiritual protector of different individuals born in the same lineage group and called by the same name. The *imipashi* of dead chiefs become tutelary deities of the land they ruled over, and responsible for its fertility and the welfare of its inhabitants. They can be approached by the successor to the chieftainship at various sacred spots in the territory and at the sacred relic shrines (*babenye*) in his own village. A chief is said to be powerful because he 'has great *imipashi*!' It is for this reason he is described as the *umwine calo*, 'owner of the land', and it is important to note that in every case the most important *imipashi* and the most sacred relics are those of the first chiefs to enter the land, or the first occupants of a chieftainship.

This dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living inhabitants of a district, or the members of a descent group, is very similar to the general Bantu pattern. But the Bemba belief in the social identification between the dead man and his appointed successor seems to me to be particularly complete. It is the basis of the belief as to the supernatural influence exerted by the chief in his own person as distinct from his direct approach to the spirits

[1] The patrilineal tribes on the Nyassaland border consider the Bemba theory of procreation as entirely ridiculous. One Ngoni expressed his contempt, thus: 'If I have a bag and put money in it, the money belongs to me and not to the bag. But the Bemba say a man puts semen into a woman and yet the child belongs to her and not to him!'